

September 2009 Monthly Newsletter

October 8, 2009

Greetings!

September was one of the busiest and most productive months since I first was elected to Congress in 1993. This past month, my colleagues and I passed major legislation to mitigate the worst effects of the recession, speed our continued recovery, and pave the way for the continued success of future generations.

We passed the largest-ever single increase to student aid funding, an extension of unemployment benefits for jobless workers, and further investment in advanced, renewable vehicle technology. These are important bills which reflect our nation's commitment to excellence across a wide range of fields. None of these bills add a cent to our national deficit, because every single one complies with the House PAY-GO rules we implemented early this year. Under these rules, all new federal spending must either be "budget neutral" or offset by other savings from existing funds.

I continue to work diligently on healthcare reform legislation.

A true champion of healthcare reform was the late Senator Edward Kennedy. The country lost a great patriot in the passing of Senator Kennedy and I lost a dear friend. His brothers inspired me to serve in public office, and his wise counsel and steadfast support has sustained me throughout my personal and public life. As a nation, we are diminished by his loss.

I'm enclosing a brief summary-the highlights-of my work in September, as well as an update on healthcare legislation, and the status of Hangar One. I'm pleased with the work we accomplished in September, but we have far more to do in the coming months.

Education
Net Neutrality

Unemployment Benefits

Loud Commercials

Vehicle Technology

Healthcare Update

Climate Change
Hangar One

Education

During his campaign President Obama pledged that by 2020 America would once again have the highest proportion of college graduates in the world. To meet this pledge the House passed H.R. 3221, the Student Aid and Fiscal Responsibility Act (SAFRA). The bill stabilizes and protects the federal student loan program, removing this federal program from the control of banks and ensuring that market fluctuations and profit of lenders do not impinge on the ability of students to obtain affordable loans for school. This bill is also the largest single increase ever made to student aid funding in our country's history.

Under the current system, the federal student loan program depends on banks and lenders who are subsidized by taxpayers. During the financial crisis, rates sky-rocketed due to market fluctuations. Families should not have to worry about the profits of banks or variations in the stock market in order to access affordable loans to educate their children. H.R. 3221 guarantees access to low rates by originating all new federal student loans through the proven Direct Loan program which is unaffected by changes in the market. Instead of subsidizing banks and lenders, the bill will create a new public-private partnership which allows lenders to compete for contracts to service loans. Non-profit insurers also will continue to have the opportunity to service loans. This cuts the fat out of the current process, providing \$87 billion in savings over the next 10 years.

These savings will be directly invested to increase funding for a variety of scholarships and student loans, including Pell Grant scholarships (\$40 billion) and the Perkins Loan program. It also provides \$10 billion to community colleges, workforce programs, online training, and adult education, and \$2.55 billion for historically black colleges and universities. It also creates new opportunities and funding for early learning programs to ensure that our children possess the educational foundation necessary for college.

As a cosponsor of this bill since its inception, I'm very proud that H.R. 3221 passed the House by a vote of 253 to 171. This will serve our country and its families and children exceedingly well.

[return to top](#)

Unemployment Benefits

More than 6.9 million jobs have been lost since the beginning of the recession in 2007. In Silicon Valley, the unemployment rate hit 11.8% in July, well above the national rate of 9.7%.

H.R. 3548, the Unemployment Compensation Extension Act of 2009, will extend emergency unemployment benefits to 300,000 jobless workers slated to lose their benefits at the end of this month, and it will help more than a million workers before the end of the

year. This bill will assist workers and families who have lost their jobs through no fault of their own and help them maintain their homes, keep their children in school, and continue to afford basic necessities. The House passed H.R. 3548 by a vote of 331 to 83.

[return to top](#)

Vehicle Technology

The Advanced Vehicle Technology Act, H.R.3246, boosts the funding for the Department of Energy to expand their Vehicle Technologies Program which develops clean, cost-competitive, and domestically produced alternative fuels and the technology for vehicles to utilize them. This legislation is the most comprehensive authorization of long-term funding for research, development, demonstration and commercial application activities ever provided to this program. The bill authorizes \$550 million for FY 2010 with an increase of \$10 million every year through FY 2014. H.R. 3246 passed the House by a vote of 312 to 114.

[return to top](#)

Climate Change

On September 25th the CIA announced their establishment of a Center on Climate Change and National Security, which will

support policymakers in dealing with the complex challenges created by climate change. I'm very pleased with this announcement-I've worked for many years for the CIA to recognize the security threats posed by climate change.

Last year the Intelligence Community issued a National Intelligence Assessment on the implications of climate change, as a result of legislation I introduced with Senator Diane Feinstein. As Chair of the Subcommittee on Intelligence Community Management, I held an open hearing on this Assessment with Rep. Ed Markey (D-MA) immediately after its publication. At the hearing, witnesses spoke of the anticipated effects of climate change-droughts, floods, a paucity of natural resources, and large refugee migrations-and warned of their impact on the stability of countries and border conflicts.

The CIA has the resources and global position to monitor and analyze the real security threat posed by climate change, and the new Center on Climate Change and National Security will be an important resource for evaluating and mitigating its impact.

[return to top](#)

Net Neutrality

Earlier this year, Rep. Ed Markey (D-MA) and I introduced the Internet Freedom Preservation Act, H.R. 3458. This bill will keep the Internet open and free of anti-competitive restraints by service providers, and continue to spur innovation and growth. Less than two months later, FCC Chairman Julius Genachowski announced his own Net Neutrality initiative. I look forward to working with the FCC to develop important telecommunications policies to maintain a competitive, innovative Internet.

[return to top](#)

Loud Commercials

I introduced the CALM

Act, H.R. 1084, to require the FCC to pass rules that would end the practice of spiking commercial noise levels to gain viewer attention. The broadcast industry is now working with cable and satellite providers to develop a method for making sound uniform - so that you will control the sound. I'll continue to press for action to eliminate the unnecessary nuisance of unnecessarily blaring TV commercials.

[return to top](#)

Healthcare

This year I helped to write a national healthcare reform plan, H.R. 3200, America's Affordable Health Choices Act, in the Energy and Commerce Committee, where it passed on July 31. Congress is now working to combine the legislation of the three House Committees that wrote parts of the bill and I anticipate that the full House will take up a bill sometime in October.

The Senate is working on two parallel pieces of legislation. The Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee passed a healthcare bill in July and the Senate Finance Committee is currently writing their version. The House and the Senate must each pass their own bill, and a Conference Committee, comprised of Members of the House and Members of the Senate will then hammer out one bill which both bodies must pass before sending to the President for his signature.

We have a significant journey ahead of us before any bill becomes law and I remain committed to healthcare reform with a public option which will benefit all Americans, without affecting individual choice or hindering quality medical care. Overall, the legislation I support keeps what's great about the American system in place, making it more accessible and affordable for all citizens, and fixes what's broken.

For more detailed information on the House bill, please visit my website (<http://eshoo.house.gov/>). On my site, you can read the key components of the bill, view a FAQ of the most frequently asked questions, and use an interactive quiz to see how reform will affect you.

[return to top](#)

Hangar One

Hangar One at Moffett Field is a Bay Area landmark and a national treasure. Its rich history and significance to our military make it imperative for us to do everything we can to preserve this icon.

I've been working closely with the heads of both NASA and the U.S. Navy to ensure that an agreement is reached to re-side the Hangar before any siding is taken down. Currently, the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) is reviewing this issue and will issue a decision in the coming weeks on who will be responsible for re-siding Hangar One. I wrote to the Secretary of the Navy asking for his commitment and he has assured me in writing that no siding will be taken down until after the OMB review. I've also weighed in with the Director of the OMB, Peter Orszag, on what his decision will mean to my constituents and have urged him to engage his highest level staff in OMB's review.

I want to thank the many, many constituents who have expressed their support for a full restoration. Community leaders Lenny Siegel and Bob Moss have helped to keep this issue at the forefront and we are all grateful to them for their advocacy and leadership.

[return to top](#)

If you have questions or comments, let me hear from you. I'm proud to represent a Congressional District where my constituents are informed and ask serious-minded, thoughtful questions, and provide me with valuable feedback. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Anna G. Eshoo

Member of Congress